ess of Wen, did not hold its place without many struggles and reverses. Under weak princes and internal dissensions, indeed, it gradually, in spite of temporary revivals, declined. Ch'in, in the territory once held by the early rulers of the Chou and long a rising power, was now the guardian of the western marches. Partly barbarian in blood, apparently it acquired prowess by constant fighting, and in the second half of the seventh century, under its great prince Mu, a contemporary of Wen, it made a temporarily successful bid for the hegemony. Ch'u in the South was always to be reckoned with, and at the beginning of the sixth century defeated Chin and seemed to be on the point of replacing it.

With one of the sudden reversals of fortune which make these centuries so- confusing, Ch'u, on the point of victory, suddenly declined (in the latter half of the sixth centurv B.C.). Chin, although not particularly strong, found an ally in Wu, a state which first emerged into prominence near the opening of the sixth century B.C. Wu, in the lower part of the Yangtze Valley and commanding the mouth of that river and the fertile plains along its lower courses, occupied most of the territory covered by the present province of Kiangsu and portions of the present Anhui, Chekiang, and Kiangsi. Some of its rulers may have had in their veins princely blood of China, brought by the southward migration of adventurous aristocrats. Its people were possibly allied racially to the Chinese, but were late in acquiring Chinese civilization and were regarded as barbarians by their northern neighbors. During the sixth century B.C., thanks in part to the ability

of its rulers, Wu became one of the most powerful states of China and continued so into the fifth century. In 482 B.C., indeed, the prince of Wu seems to have succeeded the now almost impotent princes of Chin as the real head of the league—although the titular presidency may still have remained with Chin.

Within a decade of this triumph, however, Wu collapsed (B.C. 473). The most southerly of the states of China of the later years of the Chou dynasty, Yiieh, in the modern Chekiang, destroyed it. For a time Yiieh became the outstanding state of East China. However, although it removed its capital to a point on or near the south coast of the present Shantung (B.C. 379), it did not occupy the dominant position over inland China that